

**Library of Congress Hosted Session on Casalini Shelf-Ready Service**  
***January 22, 2006, (American Library Association Midwinter Meeting, San Antonio, Texas)***  
Brief notes

Beacher Wiggins hosted this informal discussion of the Library of Congress-Casalini libri shelf-ready project with LC representatives, Casalini libri managers, and representative technical services directors of large research libraries (the Big Heads Discussion Group). Karen Calhoun, current chair of Big Heads, facilitated the two-hour discussion.

Points made by Big Heads representatives:

- Libraries want assurance that LC is pursuing all possible measures to save money, such as better use of copy; and background information: what business plan did LC develop prior to undertaking its shelf-ready project with Casalini? Did LC ascertain potential impact on the wider library community in view of LC's role as the de facto national bibliographic agency? How was the value of cataloging data as a public good considered?
- Casalini's core-level records exceed most research libraries' requirements.

Discussion of pricing structure:

- When LC budgeted for the project, it expected to pay about \$50 for each bibliographic record that it licensed. Because LC is actually paying 76 euros (ca. \$90) per record, it will have to reduce the number of records it obtains in fiscal 2006, the first year of the production project.
- Initial benefits for LC are savings in acquisitions work and better timeliness of records.
- Whereas LC saves money if Casalini's price is lower than LC's current average in-house cost of \$112 per record, other libraries need a much lower price to save any money.
- Under U.S. law, LC cannot pass on the costs of creating cataloging data to CDS customers; it can recoup only distribution and administrative costs. This fact had forced Casalini to object to distribution by LC.

Comments from Casalini:

- Casalini expects to produce about 4,000 LC core-level bibliographic records through September 2006. Casalini now has thirteen customers for these records.
- Casalini and OCLC reached agreement just before the ALA Midwinter Meeting for Casalini to distribute its core-level records directly to OCLC. In return, OCLC will make a contribution toward the cost of cataloging.
- Casalini has never demanded income from every single use of its records, but needs an average income of 100 euros for each core-level record to make the shelf-ready service sustainable. Revenue from book sales cannot sustain the shelf-ready service. Whether OCLC pays Casalini is a secondary consideration, but has some effect on Casalini's prices to libraries.
- If Casalini is to continue the shelf-ready service in 2006 and 2007, it needs timely confirmation of the number of customers, preferably by early March 2006. This target date would give Casalini a basis for hiring and training catalogers using AACR2. Casalini also needs assurance that it would have a viable income from the service over the medium term, beyond 2007. Casalini offers many titles that LC doesn't purchase; for instance, Yale buys 10,000 to 11,000 titles from Casalini annually.

Libraries' comments on Casalini perspective:

- March is too soon for libraries to commit to purchasing the shelf-ready service.
- Will OCLC find uses for the Casalini core-level records, and thereby derive some income from loading them?
- The price should not be the same for all libraries or for all core-level records.
- The most important consideration is what authority work and bibliographic data elements are really necessary in order to connect a book to its potential users.

Decisions and suggested next steps:

- The Library of Congress will host a full-day follow-up meeting, between February and April, for Big Heads representatives to continue the discussion. Suggestions included: provide an LC business advisor for the discussion; investigate what the United States library community spends to have a bibliographic infrastructure; Program for Cooperative Cataloging members should make a commitment to catalog Italian books at core-level so that Casalini would be able to use the resulting copy in its shelf-ready service.

Attendance at Jan. 22 meeting: Beacher Wiggins, Library of Congress; Karen Calhoun, Cornell University Libraries; Joachim Bartz, Casalini libri; Meg Bellinger, Yale University; Barbara Casalini, Casalini libri; Michael Charbonneau, Indiana University; Arno Kastner, New York University; Angela Kinney, LC; Lee Leighton, University of California, Berkeley; Susan Morris, LC (recorder); Jane Ouderkirk, Harvard College Library; Donald Panzera, LC; Roxanne Sellberg, Northwestern University; Cynthia Shelton, UCLA; Catherine Tierney, Stanford University; Robert Wolven, Columbia University